

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



Draft Strategic Plan

Government Performance & Results Act

April 1997

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
CPSC's Vision	2
CPSC's Mission	3
CPSC's Goal Setting Approach	4
Key External Factors	5
 II. SAFETY GOALS	 9
RESULTS-ORIENTED GOALS	10
Keeping Children Safe from Head Injuries	10
Keeping Families Safe from Fires	14
Keeping Families Safe from Carbon Monoxide Poisonings	19
Keeping Families Safe from Electrocutions	23
SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION GOALS	27
Informing the Public	27
Industry Satisfaction with CPSC Services	31
Consumer Satisfaction with CPSC Services	34
 III. SUMMARY	
(To be added later)	



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an independent regulatory agency, is responsible for protecting the American public from the unreasonable risk of injury and death from about 15,000 types of consumer products. CPSC's mission is simple and non-partisan: saving lives and keeping families safe. Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 35 and are the fifth leading cause of death in the nation. Children under five are most likely to require emergency room treatment and the elderly are most likely to die as a result of product-related injuries. Each year, there are an average of over 21,000 deaths and 29 million injuries associated with consumer products under the Commission's jurisdiction. These injuries and deaths cost the American public over \$200 billion annually.

Although product-related deaths and injuries remain a significant problem, consumer products are much safer today than in the past. Between 1975 and 1992, the death rate associated with consumer products decreased 32 percent (from 12.4 to 8.4 per 100 thousand population) and the injury rate decreased about 24 percent (from 15.2 to 11.5 per 100 population).¹ Commission activities have contributed in a significant way to this downward trend.²

Much more needs to be done, however, to protect American families from product-related deaths and injuries. In establishing the CPSC in 1972, Congress noted that consumers are often unable to anticipate risks from consumer products or to safeguard themselves, not only because of the complexities of consumer products in the marketplace but also because of the diverse nature and abilities of those who use the products.³ This is as true today as it was

then. Furthermore, many consumer products are sufficiently sophisticated and the hazards of even unsophisticated products are sufficiently hidden, that government action to inform or otherwise protect the public is justifiable and a wise use of taxpayer dollars.

The role of the Federal Government is critical. CPSC is the only Federal agency that identifies and acts on a wide range of product hazards. The problem of product-related injuries and deaths cannot be solved solely by states or localities. CPSC was created as a federal agency in part because inconsistent state or local regulation creates a significant burden on interstate commerce. Modern transportation and distribution systems make it easy to move products from coast to coast in a matter of hours, making enforcement at the state and local level difficult. Federal authority is also necessary to prevent potentially hazardous imports from entering the United States.

CPSC's VISION

The CPSC has many strategies to help it keep pace with the growing number and complexity of products that enter interstate commerce. To be ready for the next century and its challenges, the Commission will refine these strategies, as it has done so successfully in the past, and use technology to create new strategies to meet its safety mission.

In the 21st century, the Commission will continue to save lives through smart government by fostering a marketplace where consumer products are as free as possible from defects and hidden hazards using a variety of strategies (see box). The Commission's efforts to achieve voluntary solutions, as well as its mandatory rulemaking authority, will ensure that more consumer products are designed with safety in mind, thus minimizing the potential for product failure and/or human error that leads to injury. The Commission's work with standards-setting groups and through public education

Strategies for the 21st Century

- Promote voluntary action
 - Use risk-based decision making
 - Provide clear standards of compliance
 - Build successful partnerships
 - Encourage market-oriented solutions
 - Use education and information campaigns
 - Promote harmonization of international safety standards
-

campaigns will lead to the routine use of early warning and protection systems, thereby reducing the injurious consequences of product failures. The Commission's use of state of the art information technology will allow CPSC to rapidly identify products that are potentially hazardous and put more accurate and timely information into the hands of consumers to enable them to use products responsibly. As we move to a global economy, the Commission will seek to ensure that the often higher standards of the United States become the model to which other nations look when developing their own standards.

CPSC's MISSION

The Commission enforces five federal statutes: the Consumer Product Safety Act, the Flammable Fabrics Act, the Poison Prevention Packaging Act, the Federal Hazardous Substances Act and the Refrigerator Safety Act. CPSC's mission is:

- To protect the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products;
- To assist consumers in evaluating the comparative safety of consumer products;
- To develop uniform safety standards for consumer products and to minimize conflicting state and local regulations; and
- To promote research and investigation into causes and prevention of product-related deaths, illness and injuries.

CPSC's strategic plan will focus its long-term goals on reducing the risks of injury and death associated with consumer products and reaching consumers with safety information to enable them to judge the comparative safety of consumer products. The remaining two mission goals (developing uniform safety standards that minimize conflicting state and local regulations and promoting research and investigation into the causes and prevention of product-related injuries, deaths and illness), while not designed as long-term goals, will be incorporated into the process of achieving measurable reductions in injuries and deaths and improvements in informing consumers about product-related hazards.

CPSC's GOAL-SETTING APPROACH

For its first strategic plan under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), CPSC's long-term goals are classified, as described in the Act, as: results-oriented, service quality and customer satisfaction. For CPSC, results-oriented goals focus on reducing injuries and deaths associated with consumer products. Service quality-oriented goals focus on improving the services CPSC provides to its major constituents -- consumers and industry -- and include the Hotline, Internet access, publications and guidance to industry. Customer satisfaction-oriented goals focus on improving the satisfaction of consumers and industry with the Commission's services.

Agency Budget Programs. There are three major budget programs that provide the core operations for the agency: (1) Hazard Assessment and Reduction, including Hazard Identification; (2) Compliance; and (3) Consumer Information. The Hazard Assessment and Reduction program first gathers data needed to assess product hazards, and then applies proven methods for reducing or eliminating those hazards. The Compliance program obtains compliance with product safety regulations issued by the Commission, monitors industry conformance to selected voluntary standards and identifies and remedies substantial safety hazards in unregulated products. The Consumer Information program collects hazardous product data from the public and alerts the public to recalled products, safety information and regulatory actions designed to reduce product hazards.

Agency-Wide Goals. For its first strategic plan under GPRA, the Commission will develop and set long-term goals at the agency level. CPSC's performance in accomplishing its strategic goals will be measured by combining results across the three core budget programs. For example, to measure agency effectiveness in reducing injuries and deaths from consumer products, the total number of lives saved and injuries prevented will be combined from hazard projects in the Hazard Assessment and Reduction Program, corrective actions in the Compliance Program, and information and education activities in the Consumer Information Program. Setting goals and measuring performance at the agency level, compared with the program level, is more efficient and less disruptive of core operations in a small agency where interrelationships exist among the different programs.

Resources Needed to Accomplish Strategic Goals. For FY 1998, the budget request for the agency is \$45 million with a staff level of 480 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) nationwide. The draft strategic goals outlined in this document assume that at least equivalent resources or purchasing power will be available for the duration of the six-year strategic plan. These strategic or long-term goals will need to be adjusted to reflect the actual level of funding and staff made available to the agency.

Most of the Commission's resources are allocated to professional and technical staff who identify product-related hazards; investigate and act on product safety hazards and violations of safety regulations; provide recommendations to the Commission for decision-making; and inform the public about product safety. After staff costs, less than 20 percent of the agency's FY 1998 budget is available for other critical support costs, such as travel, sample testing and research. For example, travel for performing establishment inspections, conducting in-depth investigations, attending safety standards development meetings, and collecting samples for testing, represents less than two percent of the agency's budget. The challenge to the Commission is to work with these constraints while maintaining enough flexibility to fulfill its mission of protecting the public.

KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

Certain external conditions may arise over the strategic planning period that could influence the achievement of CPSC's results-oriented safety goals. This section identifies several *key factors* and describes how they might significantly affect the long term goals to reduce consumer product-related deaths and injuries.

In keeping with its long-term strategic plan, each year CPSC sets priorities, with input from the public, to allocate its anticipated resources. An annual plan specifies activities in the areas of compliance, standards development, research and data collection, and outreach. In time, the activities should result in various marketplace effects such as product modification, recall, ban, labeling or restricted use that are designed to reduce hazards. Follow-up monitoring activities determine if the safety goals of averted deaths and injuries are being realized.

Critical Emerging Hazards. To successfully accomplish the mission of the Agency, the Commission must have the flexibility to respond quickly to unplanned critical situations where the lives and health of the American public are at risk. Because the agency was significantly downsized in budget and staff during the 1980's, any flexibility needed to respond quickly to critical situations has, of necessity, required temporary reallocation of staff and resources to address a problem.

An example of the need for flexibility occurred when the Commission moved quickly to address the hazards associated with more than 250,000 dangerously flammable rayon and rayon/cotton blend skirts. These skirts, manufactured in India, did not meet CPSC's regulation for flammability and in fact burned faster than newspaper. The Commission announced the stop sale and recall after staff performed extensive sample collection and laboratory testing of the skirts. The agency notified about 50 countries exporting similar items of CPSC's flammability requirements and also worked with the U.S. Customs Service to test incoming shipments of suspect garments for compliance with the regulation. While response to this hazard resulted in only a four-week delay of other work, other critical unforeseen situations may affect the agency's resources to a greater extent. Thus, the Commission may have to modify the targets set for the long-term goals in the strategic plan in future years to reflect unexpected developments. However, we do not anticipate that these modifications will be extensive.

Severe and Prolonged Economic Recession. Such a recession could result in a significant change in consumer behavior, both in use of consumer products and in expenditures. That is, consumers might resist paying extra for safety features and could show less concern for safety and more willingness to take risks. This "recession" factor links directly to CPSC's fire, electrocution and CO safety goals, since consumer behavior could show up as reluctance to purchase updated, safer products and greater reliance on "patching" older devices. Aging components of a house or housing unit, such as old wiring, heating equipment, insulation, smoke detectors, and appliances might be retained without repair or replacement. In short, in hard economic times, consumers are likely to delay or forgo the purchase of safety-modified products that appear in the marketplace, if they cost more than other products without desirable safety features.

External Shock. An external shock, such as an oil or other energy shortage or environmental factors such as global warming, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters also might temporarily alter consumption patterns (i.e., what consumers buy and use). The energy factor links to safety goals, especially CO hazards, because low cost heat producing devices such as space heaters, wood stoves and charcoal grills are generally more hazardous than higher priced systems such as furnaces equipped with safety devices. Environmental factors such as earthquakes or floods may also adversely affect the performance of household equipment and appliances. For example, earthquakes may loosen flexible gas connectors, which in turn may increase fires and explosions.

Demographic Changes. A decrease in the birth rate, along with continued increases in life expectancy might lead the Commission to reexamine priorities and reallocate resources. The synergy of such demographic changes with an economic condition like a prolonged recession might well suggest a shift in safety focus from one population subgroup to another.

Social Fads. Historically, social fads, including fashion, have been known to result in increases in consumer injuries and fatalities, which might temporarily divert CPSC's resources to the immediate hazards and postpone work on strategic objectives. For example, skateboarding created a "spike" in injuries and deaths with a rapid increase and subsequent decrease in the national estimates.

Changes in Technology are likely to continue to profoundly affect the number and type of consumer products on the market. New products often are accompanied by unexpected hazards, possibly from a design defect, user error, or some combination of the two. Examples of changes in technology include surge protectors that were unavailable 20 years ago and inexpensive halogen lighting that is attractive for use in temporary quarters such as college dormitories. New technologies may require expanded use of agency resources to conduct in-depth studies.

Other external events. Actions by Congress, other agencies, the private sector, and petitions from outside interested parties may act as key factors that could retard CPSC's ability to meet its objectives. In the past, Congress has enacted legislation directing CPSC to work, or to avoid working, in specified areas. Such mandated shifts in resources could affect goal

achievement negatively, if there were shifts from work in progress, or positively, if additional focus was given to the area. Interagency cooperation or joint efforts with industry, while generally supportive of safety outcomes, also may shift attention from the original strategic goals.

ENDNOTES

¹Estimates from the Directorate for Epidemiology and Health Sciences.

²Zick, C., Mayer, R., and Alves, L (1986). Does the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Make a Difference? An Assessment of Its First Decade. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 6, 25-40.

³Consumer Product Safety Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2051(a)(2).

STRATEGIC GOALS

For its first strategic plan, the Commission will focus on: four results-oriented goals and three service quality/customer satisfaction goals. These are:

Results-Oriented Strategic Goals

- Reduce head injuries to children.
- Reduce deaths from fires.
- Reduce deaths from carbon monoxide poisonings.
- Reduce deaths from electrocutions.

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction Strategic Goals

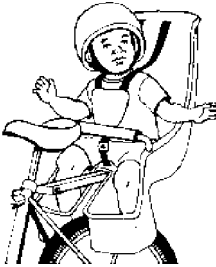
- Increase public contacts through the Web and *Consumer Product Safety Review*.
- Attain a specified level of satisfaction of industry with CPSC services.
- Sustain the current satisfaction of consumers with CPSC's Hotline and Clearinghouse, and the states with CPSC's State Partnership Program.

To develop results-oriented injury and death reduction goals for the strategic plan, the Commission classified its activities and projects by the type of product hazard associated with injuries and deaths (see box). Mechanical hazards were also classified by product type because this hazard is associated with a large number of injuries and deaths. Long-term goals were developed for some of the seven hazard areas -- future strategic plans may set goals in other hazard areas. To develop service quality/customer satisfaction goals, the Commission focused on those services that directly touch both industry and consumers.

HAZARD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

- Fire Hazards
- Mechanical Hazards:
 - Children's Products
 - Household/Structural
 - Power Tools and Equipment
 - Sports and Recreation
- Electric Shock Hazards
- Chemical Hazards

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM HEAD INJURIES



STRATEGIC GOAL: The rate of head injury to children under 15 years old will be reduced by [10% - 15%] from 1996 to 2006.

THE HAZARD

Head injury is a leading cause of death and disability to children in the United States. In 1995 alone, there were an estimated 800,000 head injuries to children under 15 years old that were treated in hospital emergency rooms, or about 60 percent of all head injuries. Of these, about 475,000 were to children under 5 years old. Studies have shown that children have a higher risk of head injury than adults and that children's head injuries are often more severe.

Head injuries are potentially more serious than other injuries and can have life-altering consequences. In 1995, about 80 percent of the head injuries to children under 15 years old were diagnosed as concussions, fractures and internal head injuries, potentially the more serious head injuries. The types of consumer products under the Commission's jurisdiction that are most often associated with head injuries to children include bicycles, playground equipment, and juvenile products. Participation in sports is also associated with high numbers of children's head injuries.

REDUCING THE RISK

Over the past ten years, the Commission has been successful in reducing many types of injuries to children by focusing on specific products (see box next page), such as bicycles (27% reduction in all types of injuries), swings and swing sets (26% reduction) and high chairs (42% reduction). In setting a 10-year strategic goal to focus on reducing head injuries to children, about 40 product categories were selected with high numbers of head injuries to children that included products with past, current, and potential future Commission activity. This inventory will be used for baseline information and allow for project selection over a number of years.

Ten-year head injury trends for products in the inventory showed reductions for product categories where the Commission has had significant activity, such as bicycles (35%

reduction in head injuries), swings and swing sets (24%), slides (42%) and high chairs (41%). The head injury rate has remained relatively stable over the ten year period, from an average rate of 35.4 in the late 1980s to 34.3 per 10,000 children in the mid-to-late 1990s, for all products in the inventory, including those product categories where the Commission has not yet focused its work.

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

To reduce head injuries to children, CPSC staff proposes a goal of reducing the head injury rate for the combined product categories somewhere in the range of 10 to 15 percent. At 10 percent, the head injury rate would be reduced from about 32.3 in 1996 to 29.2 per 10,000 children in the population in 2006. At 15 percent, the head injury rate would be reduced from about 32.3 in 1996 to 27.5 per 10,000 children in the population in 2006. *Staff seeks input from interested parties as to where to set the goal so that it would be most appropriate and practicable.*

Child Safety Standards (Head Injury-Related)

Baby Walkers
Bicycle Helmets
Bicycles
Bunk Beds
Carriages & Strollers
Cribs, Full Size
Cribs, Non-Full Size
Gates & Enclosures
High Chairs
Hook-On-Chairs
Lawn Darts
Playpens
Toddler Beds
Toy Chests

STRATEGIES

There are a number of successful strategies that can reduce head injuries. These include: increased use of protective head gear, low-impact surfaces, and restraining devices, particularly among the youngest children; improved product design to address specific hazards; and increased awareness by caregivers to potential hazards. CPSC has used or promoted all of these strategies to reduce child-related head injuries from consumer products. For example, to prevent falls down stairs to young children, CPSC worked with industry to develop a baby walker safety standard. To meet the requirements of the new standard, walkers will have to stop at the top of the steps, remain stationary, or be too wide to fit through a standard-sized doorway. Staff estimates that this standard will reduce walker-related injuries from falls down stairs by over 50 percent. CPSC also conducts an average of 37 recalls and corrective actions a year for products such as bassinets, bicycles, bunk beds, cribs, infant carriers, and swing sets.

A number of strategies will be used to meet the long-term goal of reducing the head injury rate for children. CPSC will:

- Encourage the use of protective head gear and other protective equipment.
- Encourage the use of safety restraints on appropriate products.
- Encourage conformance to CPSC's Playground Safety Guidelines, particularly on low impact surfacing materials for schools and parks.

- Develop programs to encourage the roundup of children's products that do not meet safety standards.
- Continue to participate in selected voluntary standards committees to improve current child-related safety standards and develop new ones, as appropriate.
- Continue recalls or corrective actions of products that do not comply with child safety standards or defective products that present a substantial product hazard.
- Increase the awareness of caregivers of critical child safety information by developing targeted programs such as the successful CPSC Baby Safety Shower campaign.

LONG TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The long-term performance measure that will be used to evaluate CPSC's goal of reducing head injuries to children is the head injury rate per 10,000 children in the population for the inventory of products selected as potential candidates. Commission staff will track product specific head injury rates for the inventory annually.

Head injury estimates are based on data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), a national probability sample of hospital emergency rooms that report daily to the Commission. The number of children in the United States population is available from Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce. Societal costs include information from CPSC's Injury Cost Model and other sources.

OTHER AGENCIES WITH SIMILAR PROGRAMS

The CPSC staff works closely with staff of other agencies in order to more efficiently address the safety of children, including issues related to head injury, to enhance the effectiveness of our efforts to achieve injury reduction goals, and to avoid duplication of effort. Among these are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ ASTM | ■ National Center for Injury Prevention & Control, Centers for Disease Control |
| ■ Bureau of Maternal and Child Health | ■ National Highway Traffic Safety Admin. |
| ■ Children's Safety Network | ■ National Institute of Child Health & Human Development |
| ■ Consumer Federation of America | ■ National Safe Kids Campaign |
| ■ International Consumer Product Health & Safety Organization | ■ National Recreation and Parks Assoc. |
| ■ Juvenile Products Manufacturers Assoc. | ■ Toy Manufacturers of America |
| ■ National 4-H Foundation | |

Cooperative and collaborative efforts have ranged from data collection to outreach activities. Memoranda of Understanding have been developed as necessary to share data and other information. In support of these activities, CPSC's unique data gathering systems have proven to be invaluable tools for defining the nature and scope of product-related hazards.

As a federal health, safety, and regulatory agency, CPSC has the unique task of translating head injury data and research into safety recommendations for consumers and, as necessary, mandatory and voluntary consumer product safety standards. CPSC's development of a mandatory bicycle helmet standard is an important example of action taken to address a head injury problem of concern to a broad spectrum of public and private agencies and organizations.

REFERENCES

Adler, Prowpit. Head Injuries to Children: 1995. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1997.

Nakamura, Suad. Mandatory Standards for Bicycle Helmets. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1995.

KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM FIRES



STRATEGIC GOAL: The rate of death from fire-related causes will be reduced by [10%-15%] from 1994 to 2004.

THE HAZARD

In 1994, over 3,400 people died because of fires that started in their homes. These fires resulted in property losses of over \$4.3 billion. Children are particularly vulnerable. Each year over 1,000 children under the age of 15 die from fire-related causes and over 600 of these deaths are to children under the age of five years. In fact, children under age five have a fire death rate more than twice the national average. Children at increased risk are those from low income and minority families who live in poorer urban and rural areas.

Most deaths occur from fires that start at night while families are asleep. Four times as many victims die from inhaling smoke and toxic gases than from burns. The types of products under CPSC jurisdiction that are most often involved in fire deaths are upholstered furniture, mattresses and bedding, and heating equipment. These three products accounted for almost 50 percent of the fire deaths. Cooking equipment, primarily ranges and ovens, was the most frequent source of fires.

REDUCING THE RISK

Deaths due to fire have been substantially reduced since 1980. There were 700 fewer home fire-related deaths in 1994 than there were just 10 years ago because of the efforts of CPSC and others. The average risk of death decreased from 53.4 in the mid 1980's to 38.3 deaths per million households in the early 1990s (1994 was the most recent year for which data was available). CPSC's contribution to this success can be attributed to its work with industry in developing a number of voluntary and mandatory safety standards (see box next page), public information campaigns, working in partnerships with other interested groups and continuing compliance efforts. CPSC also conducted an average of 126 recalls and corrective actions a year for products with fire hazards, such as flammable clothing, computers, fireworks, small and large appliances, and gas valves.

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

To reduce fire-related deaths further, CPSC staff proposes a goal of reducing the death rate somewhere in the range of 10 to 15 percent. At 10 percent, fire-related deaths would be reduced from about 35.7 in 1994 to 32.1 deaths per million households by 2004. At 15 percent, fire-related deaths would be reduced from about 35.7 in 1994 to 30.3 deaths per million households by 2004. *Staff seeks input from interested parties as to where to set the goal so that it would be most appropriate and practicable.*

The goals were determined by examining the frequency, severity and addressability of fires related to specific consumer products and the future development of home fire detection and suppression technology. The percent decrease in the death rate may be somewhat smaller than would be expected from past reductions. This is because many of the improvements that occurred in the recent past have successfully addressed products with the largest numbers of fire deaths. Future activities will address the next tier of products that are associated with a smaller percentage of fire deaths.

STRATEGIES

There are a number of effective strategies that can help reduce fire deaths. These include: the availability of safer products, early warning systems, improved fire control and suppression, public education, more effective building codes, and better burn treatment. With the exception of better burn treatment, CPSC has used or promoted all of these strategies to reduce fire-related deaths from consumer products. For example, CPSC worked with a regulated industry to develop a standard on child-resistant cigarette lighters that went into effect in 1994. Fire loss data showed that there were an average of about 5,600 residential fires, 150 deaths and 1,000 injuries that resulted from children under age 5 playing with lighters. This standard should prevent 80 to 105 fire deaths each year, a savings to society that is 10 times the current annual budget of the CPSC.

A number of strategies will be used to meet the long-term goal of reducing the fire-related death rate. CPSC will:

- Address the hazards associated with open-flame ignition of furniture and mattresses.
- Address the hazards associated with ranges fires.

Fire Safety Standards
Child-resistant lighters
Children's sleepwear
Christmas lights
Carpets
Cellulose insulation
Clothing
Clothes Dryers
Electric blankets
Electric space heaters
Electric appliances
Extension cords
Fireworks
Gas furnaces
Gas water heaters
Halogen lamps
Heat tapes
Kerosene heaters
LP gas systems
Mattresses
Receptacle outlets
Recessed light fixtures
Smoke detectors
Television receivers
Upholstered furniture
Woodburning stoves

- Encourage the development of strengthened voluntary safety standards to further improve the reliability and effectiveness of smoke detectors.
- Continue to work with consumers and other agencies to encourage the increased use and maintenance of smoke detectors and the use of residential sprinklers in new and retrofit home construction.
- Encourage the replacement of hazardous electrical wiring systems in older homes.
- Increase the public awareness of critical fire safety information.
- Continue participation in selected voluntary standard committees to enhance industry's efforts to manufacture safer products.
- Continue enforcement of mandatory flammability performance standards to reduce fire deaths related to ignition of mattresses, carpets, children's sleepwear, fireworks, and wearing apparel and deaths due to child play with cigarette lighters.
- Continue to recall or develop corrective action plans for products that do not comply with safety regulations, or defective products that present a substantial product hazard.
- Continue ongoing surveillance of fire incident data and reports to identify and act on emerging or unknown product-related fire hazards.
- Seek partnerships with states, public and private organizations to achieve more cost effective solutions to identified fire hazards.
- Pursue mandatory standards, where appropriate, to reduce risk of fire deaths related to consumer products.

LONG TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The long term performance measure that will be used to evaluate CPSC 's goal for reducing fire-related deaths is the annual fire-related death rate per million households. Commission staff track consumer product involvement in fire-related deaths, injuries, fires, and the extent of the property damage annually.

Information on fire-related injuries and deaths, fire and property damage is available from several sources, including Commission studies, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), the National Center for Health Statistics, and others. Special studies, often conducted cooperatively with fire departments throughout the nation, allow more detailed information on the involvement of consumer products in fire

injuries and deaths. The number of households and population in various age groups in the United States is available from the Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce. Societal costs include information from CPSC's Injury Cost Model and other sources, and an assumed cost of \$5 million per statistical life, consistent with economic literature.

Note that because death data from local fire departments, the states, USFA and NFPA takes about two years to complete, we will know whether we reached our goal for 2004 in 2006.

OTHER AGENCIES WITH SIMILAR PROGRAMS

The CPSC staff works closely with staff of other agencies and organizations in order to more efficiently address fire issues, to enhance the effectiveness of our efforts to achieve fire loss reduction goals, and to avoid duplication of effort. These include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ American Gas Association | ■ National Highway Traffic Safety Admin. |
| ■ Building Code Groups | ■ National Institute of Standards & Technology |
| ■ Centers for Disease Control | ■ National Smoke Detector Project |
| ■ Congressional Fire Services Institute | ■ Occupational Safety & Health Admin. |
| ■ Depart. of Housing & Urban Development | ■ State of California |
| ■ Federal Aviation Administration | ■ Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. |
| ■ National Assoc. of State Fire Marshals | ■ U.S. Fire Administration |
| ■ National Fire Protection Assoc. | |

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) collects and provides essential data on residential fires, stimulates new technology, and conducts public education campaigns relating to fire. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) performs basic and applied research in the fire sciences, provides their facilities for special fire testing, and serves as a comprehensive resource for standards information. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide programs and grants to expand community awareness in the field. The Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) was a member of the Steering Committee of CPSC's National Smoke Detector Project.

CPSC communicates with other agencies that have regulatory authority and conduct research in areas beyond CPSC jurisdiction, such as the Federal Aviation Administration (aircraft), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (workplace), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (automotive), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (manufactured housing). A private sector organization, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), has a major role in the collection and analysis of residential fire data in addition to developing and publishing this country's national fire codes and voluntary standards, investigating major fires, and conducting public information and education programs. CPSC staff continually communicate and interact with these and other organizations, including State and local agencies.

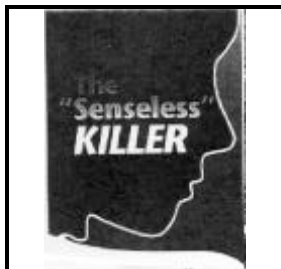
For instance, the National Smoke Detector Project, organized by CPSC in 1991, was overseen by a Steering Committee of CPSC, USFA, NFPA, and CFSI. Many other groups worked with us, including NIST, HUD, CDC, trade associations, and local and state Fire Marshals. USFA has provided supporting funds for CPSC projects on range fires, smoke detectors, and home electrical wiring systems. FAA, NIST, and the State of California have consulted with CPSC staff on technical issues related to upholstered furniture. CPSC staff participates in the CDC Healthy People 2000 Work Group on Fire Prevention, and CPSC has provided limited funding in support of their fire prevention initiative. We maintain continuing liaison with USFA on a variety of other fire-related topics including fire training, data collection and analysis, and public education. Our close coordination with other agencies and the fire community will continue.

REFERENCES

Smith, L., and Long, K. *1994 Residential Fire Loss Estimates*. Washington, D.C. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1996.

Harwood, B. and Hall, J. Jr. Smoke Inhalation or Burns? *Fire Journal*, May/June 1989, pp.29-34.

KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM CARBON MONOXIDE POISONINGS



STRATEGIC GOAL: The rate of death from carbon monoxide poisoning will be reduced by [25%-30%] from 1993 to 2003.

THE HAZARD

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell, color or taste - truly a "senseless" killer. This gas is produced by burning any fuel, such as gas, oil, wood, and coal, so that any fuel-burning appliance is a potential CO source. Available data show that an average of 250 people die and almost 5,000 are injured each year from CO poisoning-related incidents, excluding incidents involving auto exhaust and fires, at a residential societal cost of over 1 billion dollars annually. Children under 15 years account for 10 percent of the deaths and 38 percent of the injuries. Because some of the symptoms of CO poisoning may mimic common illnesses such as influenza or colds, there is a high incidence of missed initial diagnosis. Not only are victims frequently unaware of exposure to CO, but health care providers often do not suspect, or check for, CO poisoning.

The majority of consumer product-related CO poisoning deaths involve gas-fueled appliances, including space heaters, furnaces, water heaters, ranges and ovens, gas grills and propane lanterns. Many of the deaths and injuries occur during the winter months when heating equipment is most often used. Often people are overcome during sleep and never wake up. Other deaths occur when victims spend the night in a van, car, tent or cabin and burn charcoal or use camping heaters to keep warm.

REDUCING THE RISK

Deaths from carbon monoxide poisonings have decreased about 34 percent over the past 10 years, from 323 deaths in 1983 to 213 deaths in 1993. The risk of death decreased from an average of 3.40 in the early 1980s to 2.44 deaths per million households in the early 1990s (1993 was the most recent year when data was available). CPSC has used a number of interventions to reduce these deaths, including: working with industry to develop new products that have technology to protect consumers from CO poisoning, developing a performance standard for CO detectors and warning the public through information and education campaigns (see box next page).

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

To further reduce deaths from carbon monoxide poisonings, CPSC staff proposes a goal of reducing the death rate somewhere in the range of 25 to 30 percent. At 25 percent, deaths from CO poisonings would be reduced from about 2.21 in 1993 to 1.66 deaths per million households by 2003. At 30 percent, deaths from CO poisonings would be reduced from about 2.21 in 1993 to 1.55 deaths per million households by 2003. *Staff seeks input from interested parties as to where to set the goal so that it would be most appropriate and practicable.*

There has been a substantial decrease in CO poisoning deaths due to safer products and consumer awareness; however in 1994, only about 7 percent of American households were equipped with at least one carbon monoxide detector. Technological problems, such as alarms at nonhazardous CO levels, have discouraged people from installing these detectors. While most of the decrease in the death rates for the past 10 years has been due to the increased safety of products, further decreases will depend to a greater extent on increased use of CO detectors and consumer awareness.

STRATEGIES

CPSC will pursue two approaches to further reduce CO poisoning deaths: improving products to reduce the amount of CO emissions and promoting the use of CO detectors in every American home. CPSC will:

- Encourage the development of more reliable CO detectors.
- Develop or strengthen voluntary standards for specific products.
- Increase the use of reliable CO detectors in residential dwellings in the United States.
- Continue recalls and corrective actions of products that present CO hazards.
- Continue public awareness by publicizing "CO Safety Awareness Week" each September.
- Encourage national model building code organizations to include a provision for the installation of state-of-the-art CO detectors in all new residential construction.

CPSC Interventions

- *Safety Standards*
 - Charcoal warning labels
 - Unvented gas space heaters
 - Oxygen depletion sensors
 - Blocked vent safety shutoff
 - CO detector safety standard
- *Recalls & corrective actions:*
 - Boilers
 - Camping heaters
 - CO Detectors
 - Fireplaces
 - Furnaces
 - Gas controls
 - Heaters
 - Propane refrigerators
 - Ranges
- *Safety Alerts*
- *CO Safety Awareness Week*

- Work with the National Fire Protection Association to develop a national standard on where and how to install CO detectors.

LONG TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The long-term performance measure that will be used to evaluate CPSC's carbon monoxide goal is the annual CO-related death rate per million households. Commission staff track product specific CO-related deaths and injuries annually.

CO poisoning deaths are based on data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and the Commission's Death Certificate File (death certificates for product-related hazards that CPSC buys directly from the States). The number of households in the United States is available from Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce. Societal costs include information from CPSC's Injury Cost Model and other sources with an assumed cost of \$5 million per statistical life, consistent with economic literature.

Note that because the processing of death data reported to NCHS and to CPSC through the states takes about three years to complete, we will know whether we reached our goal for 2003 in 2006.

OTHER AGENCIES WITH SIMILAR PROGRAMS

CPSC has the primary role in addressing consumer products which produce carbon monoxide hazards. However, the goal of reducing carbon monoxide deaths is one that is shared by other federal agencies as well as private sector and not-for-profit organizations. The Commission has worked with these other agencies and organizations in order that the individual efforts of preventing CO deaths can be strengthened without needless duplication.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ American Gas Association | ■ Gas Detection Industry Association |
| ■ American Lung Association | ■ Gas Research Institute |
| ■ Colorado Department of Public Health | ■ National Assoc of State Fire Marshals |
| ■ Committee on Indoor Air Quality | ■ Occupational Safety and Health Admin. |
| ■ Consumer Federation of America | ■ State and local fire departments/associations |
| ■ Environmental Protection Agency | ■ Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. |
| ■ Gas Appliance Manufacturers Assoc. | |

Carbon monoxide poisoning is associated with the use of household appliances, boats, cars, gasoline-powered tools, farm equipment -- in other words, a wide array of products whose jurisdiction is covered by several agencies. CPSC staff attends quarterly meetings of the interagency Committee on Indoor Air Quality (CIAQ) and exchanges information on activities

related to carbon monoxide hazards. In 1996, CPSC staff worked together with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment in 1996 to produce a brochure on preventing CO poisoning from the use of small gasoline-powered tools and engines. Also, CPSC joined with EPA's Indoor Air Quality staff and the American Gas Association, the Gas Detection Industry Association, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, and the Gas Research Institute, to co-sponsor a CO Detector Workshop and CO Detector Task Forces.

The effort to make the American public more aware of the hazards of carbon monoxide poisoning and the availability and use of CO detectors needs the participation of a large number of groups. Fire departments, gas utility companies, heating contractors, medical groups, detector manufacturers, gas appliance manufacturers, voluntary standards organizations, federal, state, and local government agencies, building code organizations, and consumer groups -- all are and must be involved in helping to reduce the deaths and injuries from CO poisoning.

REFERENCES

- Long, K. *Non Fire-Related Carbon Monoxide Deaths and Injuries Associated with the Use of Household Appliances*. Washington, D.C. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, September 1996.
- Long, K. and Saltzman, L. *Non Fire-Related Carbon Monoxide Incidents: Morbidity and Mortality Related to the Use of Household Appliances*. Washington, D.C. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, January 1995.

KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM ELECTROCUTIONS



STRATEGIC GOAL: The rate of death from electrocutions will be reduced by 15% to 20% from 1993 to the year 2003.

THE HAZARD

There are over 200 deaths from electrocutions each year in the United States. Ten percent of the deaths are to children under 15 years old. The deaths occurred most often because an electrical current came in contact with a victim's body and traveled through the victim to the ground. For example, a five-year-old boy was electrocuted when he touched a defective lamp, received a shock, and died when the lamp fell on top of his body causing further electric shock. Most of the deaths could have been prevented by installing ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). These are inexpensive electrical devices that are installed in household electrical circuits and in small appliances. CPSC's research into miniaturized GFCIs demonstrated the feasibility of building electrocution protection into small appliances and industry further developed this technology so that appliances such as hand-held hairdryers are now completely protected. However, not all homes and products are protected by GFCIs. The Commission continues to receive reports of electrocution deaths from such products as house wiring, lamps and light fixtures, antennas, power tools, and small and large appliances.

REDUCING THE RISK

Deaths from electrocutions have decreased by almost 50 percent over the past 10 years, from 400 deaths in 1983 to 210 deaths in 1993. The average risk of death decreased from 15.0 in the early 1980s to 8.6 deaths per 10 million people in the early 1990s (1993 was the most recent year for which data was available). Reducing these deaths were the result of several efforts by CPSC (see box next page). The Commission worked cooperatively with the National Fire Protection Association's Electrical Code Panels, developed safety standards and conducted recalls and corrective actions, all resulting in safer electrical products. For example, CPSC worked with the Code Panels to develop requirements that electrical outlets be protected by GFCIs. In some cases, CPSC developed the technical proposals that were adopted by the Panels. CPSC, through its data collection systems, also provided critical information characterizing the factors involved in the accidents in support of most of the requirements for consumer shock protection that have been added to the National Electrical Code since 1973.

At the same time, CPSC worked with industry to develop design and performance safety standards that have reduced or eliminated the risk of electrocutions for such products as hair dryers, power tools, CB antennas, and electric toys. CPSC also conducted an average of 28 recalls and corrective actions a year for products with electrocution hazards, such as air conditioners, battery chargers, extension cords, fans, hair dryers, lamps, portable heaters and refrigerator compressors. In warning the public about the hazards of electrical products, CPSC initiated an annual education campaign (Electrical Safety Month) in 1982. With the help of other groups concerned about electrical safety, CPSC has continued to participate in this campaign each year to educate consumers on to the hazards of electrical products.

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

To further reduce deaths from electrocutions, CPSC staff proposes a goal of reducing the death rate somewhere in the range of 15 to 20 percent. At 15 percent, deaths from electrocutions would be reduced from 8.1 in 1993 to 6.9 deaths per million people in 2003. At 20 percent, electrocutions would be reduced from about 8.1 in 1993 to 6.5 deaths per million people in 2003. *Staff seeks input from interested parties as to where to set the goal so that it would be most appropriate and practicable.*

STRATEGIES

To reduce electrocutions, CPSC will:

- Work with the National Fire Protection Association's Electrical Code Panels to propose additional improvements in the requirements for appliances and electrical equipment.
- Work with voluntary standards groups to continue to improve the design of GFCI's resulting in easier installation and fail-safe features.
- Continue the effort to remove older power tools with poor insulation and high risk of electrocution from the hands of consumers.
- Increase consumer awareness of electrical hazards through continuing education efforts in electrical safety and publicize "Electrical Safety Month" each May.

CPSC Interventions

- GFCI code for:
 - Outdoor outlets
 - Bathroom outlets
 - Garage outlets
 - Marina outlets
 - Boatyard outlets
 - Hotel/motel outlets
 - Kitchen outlets
 - Basement outlets
 - Crawl space outlets
 - Pressure washers
 - Spas
 - Hot tubs
 - Wet bar sink outlets
- Code for service lines
- Standards:
 - Power tools standards
 - Hair dryer standards
 - Electric toy standard
 - CB antenna standards
- Recalls & Corrective actions: 28 per year
- Information and Education
 - Electrical Safety Month
 - Electrical Safety Checklist
 - Home Electrical Safety

- Continue recalls or corrective actions of products that do not comply with safety regulations or defective products that present a substantive product hazard.

LONG TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The long term performance measure that will be used to evaluate CPSC 's goal for reducing electrocution deaths is the annual death rate per million households. Commission staff track consumer product involvement in electrocution deaths for specific types of products annually.

Electrocution deaths are based on data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and the Commission's Death Certificate File (death certificates that CPSC buys directly from the States). The population of various age groups in the United States is available from Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce. Societal costs include information from CPSC's Injury Cost Model and other sources and an assumed cost of \$5 million per statistical life, consistent with economic literature.

Note that because processing of death data reported to NCHS and to CPSC through the states takes about three years to complete, we will know whether we have reached our goal for 2003 in 2006.

OTHER AGENCIES WITH SIMILAR PROGRAMS

There are no other Federal Agencies with specific programs designed to reduce electrocution deaths involving consumer products. There are now, and have been in the past, many supporters of improved electrical safety, including both federal and private organizations. Some of these are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Army Corps of Engineers | ■ National Electrical Safety Foundation |
| ■ Department of Agriculture | ■ National Fire Protection Association |
| ■ Department of Health & Human Services | ■ Occupational Safety and Health Admin. |
| ■ Department of Housing & Urban Development | ■ Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. |
| ■ Department of Veterans Affairs | ■ U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs |
| ■ National Electrical Code | ■ Trade and Industry Associations |

The most prominent of the private groups is the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). This group sponsors the National Electrical Code (NEC) that covers the installation of electrical shock protection devices. The National Code in turn is utilized by state and local entities in building codes. Many other Federal agencies participate in the NEC including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Agriculture, and the Army Corps of Engineers. CPSC serves on the NEC Committee and is actively involved in this widely adopted voluntary standard.

CPSC and the Department of Health and Human Services - Center for Medical Devices and Radiological Health consult on electrical safety, including shock from medical devices and therapeutic appliances.

The U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs distributes electrical safety information and CPSC staff serve as consultants to them on technical matters related to electric shock.

The National Electrical Safety Foundation, a private, not-for-profit organization, provides topical materials for consumer and workplace electrical safety. CPSC provides technical input to this foundation on an on-going basis. For example, a home electrical safety checklist was produced by the Foundation for CPSC and is also available from the Consumer Information Center, U.S. General Services Administration.

Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) is a private not-for-profit organization that was formed when electrical products were first introduced. UL develops voluntary electrical safety standards for consumer products that are widely adopted by industry. CPSC regularly proposes upgrades to many UL standards and provides substantiation in the form of injury and death incident data, and technical research for proposed changes.

CPSC also consults with and makes recommendations to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - Manufactured Housing and Construction Standards Division on matters of electrical safety related to shock and fire hazards with mobile homes.

REFERENCES

Long, K. 1993. *National Estimates of Electrocutions Associated with Consumer Products*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, September 1996.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC



STRATEGIC GOAL: An increase in consumer awareness of CPSC safety information by the year 2001 through:

- An [80%-100%] increase in contacts to CPSC's Web Site.
- An [80%-100%] increase in the reach of the Commission's newsletter, *Consumer Product Safety Review*.

Topics will include consumer product recalls and other safety information consumers can use to protect themselves and their families.

THE PROGRAM

Part of the Commission's mission is to assist consumers in evaluating the comparative safety of consumer products. To accomplish this requires a communication network that educates and informs the public about the safe use of consumer products and product recalls (see box). The network also receives reports about unsafe products, as well as inquiries about product recalls.

CPSC uses a variety of techniques to effectively and economically communicate vital safety information to the public and encourage feedback. The Commission's information system includes Hotline services, Internet services, the National Injury Information Clearinghouse, media programs, publications, consumer information and education programs, and partnership programs.

The CPSC has taken several steps during the past few years to improve its information exchange with the public. CPSC's Hotline is an especially effective way for the agency to share and receive life-saving information about dangerous products with the public. During the past two years, the number of incoming phone lines

CPSC Communication Network

- Toll Free Hotline Services
- Internet Services
- National Injury Information Clearinghouse Services
- Electronic Media Services
 - Video News Releases for TV
 - Radio Spots
 - Live Appearances on National TV
- Print Media Services
 - News Releases
 - Safety Alerts
 - Magazine Monthly Columns
- Consumer Publications
- The *Consumer Product Safety Review*
- Information & Education Programs
- Partnership Programs

was increased from eight to 24 to handle a rise in the number of calls. Hotline representatives increased from four to five with an increase in bilingual staff (Spanish/English) from one to two. Also, CPSC identified volunteers agency-wide to respond to callers in a total of 19 languages. During FY 1995, CPSC received Vice President Al Gore's Reinventing Government "Hammer Award" for improving service to the public through its Hotline.

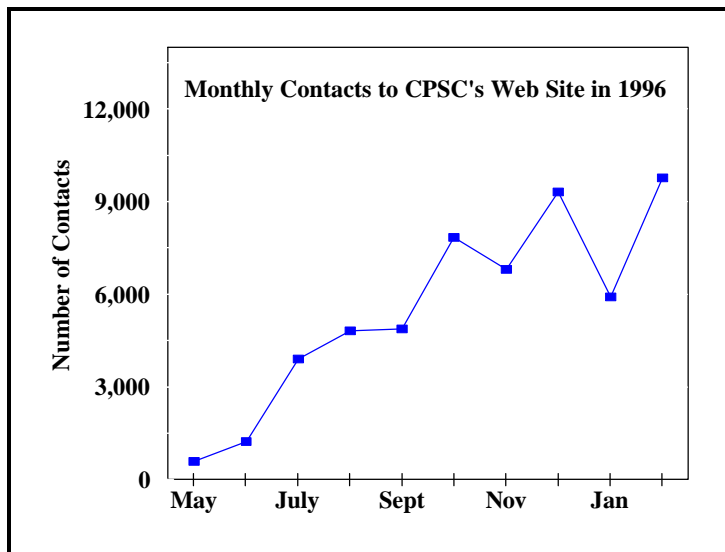
Multiple airings of CPSC's video news releases (VNR) across the nation and appearances on national television are effective, inexpensive ways to swiftly reach millions of consumers with critical safety information. VNRs are press releases sent out in television news format via satellite to television news stations across the country at no charge to the station. Those stations then air the VNRs as part of their news programs. Follow-up information for the televised safety messages is available to those who call the CPSC toll-free Hotline or access the CPSC's Home Page on the Internet. In 1995 alone, more than **282 million television viewers** were exposed to CPSC's vital safety information. The use of television to inform the public has steadily increased since 1994 and is expected to continue to grow.

Partnership programs are used to achieve information and education goals and objectives of both CPSC and outside organizations. Through such programs, information (print and electronic format) is packaged and disseminated to the constituents of each organization. One such partnership program, *Baby Safety Showers*, was developed with assistance from Gerber Products Company. This highly publicized program has been adopted by a number of agencies and organizations across the country to reach millions of parents, grandparents, and other child-care providers on a continuing basis.

INCREASING INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The CPSC Web Site was established in April 1996. Among the services available to the public are access to news releases and publications, and a way to report complaints, injuries and deaths involving consumer products. There has been more than a seventeen-fold increase in the number of monthly contacts at the Web Site, from 567 contacts in April 1996 to 9,771 contacts in February 1997.

In the summer of 1996, the agency launched CPSC's first scholarly publication, *Consumer Product Safety Review*. This quarterly publication is designed to meet the needs of public health and medical professionals, consumer and health scholars, and consumer product retailers,



manufacturers, and lawyers, among others. Each issue includes the latest national injury and death data on selected home and recreational products, the most important and latest recalls of consumer products, and easy-to-use methods for reporting consumer product-related injuries to CPSC's national data collection systems. Each issue also contains case studies of deaths involving consumer products submitted by medical examiners and coroners across the country, information that was previously published in *MECAP News*. The CPSC currently has in excess of 1,000 paid subscriptions to this publication. The text is also available on the Internet at CPSC's Home Page. As of February 1997, there have been 3,100 visits to the *Review* on the Web since publication of the first issue.

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

CPSC has set a strategic goal to have an increase in consumer awareness of CPSC safety information by the year 2001, using the most cost effective means possible. CPSC staff propose an increase in the range of 80-100% of contacts at CPSC's Web Site on the Internet. CPSC staff also propose an increase in the range of 80-100 percent of subscriptions and Web Site visits for the Commission's newsletter, *Consumer Product Safety Review*. This will mean the newsletter is reaching not only more individual consumers, but also more safety professionals who will in turn use the CPSC information in their own communications. *Staff seeks input from interested parties as to where to set the goal so that it would be most appropriate and practicable.*

STRATEGIES

There are a number of effective strategies for increasing consumer awareness of CPSC safety information. They are to:

- Establish media and outreach plans for disseminating the results of each hazard assessment and reduction projects to be included in budget and operating plan cycles.
- Maintain the high level of public exposure to CPSC safety information nationally through the release of VNRs and appearances on national television programs by Commission representatives. These are inexpensive ways to effectively reach millions of consumers.
- Increase partnership programs for the purpose of developing, promoting, and multiplying the dissemination of safety information.
- Expand the agency's Internet capabilities to give the media, consumers, and others more options for receiving the agency's comparative safety information.

LONG TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

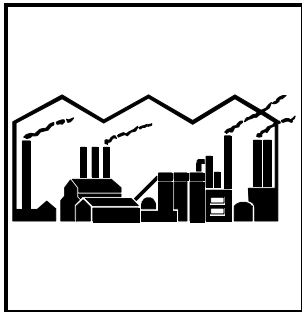
The Commission will focus the success of its consumer information efforts in two areas: the number of Web Site contacts and the public's awareness of the Commission's *Consumer Product Safety Review*, both through subscriptions and Web Site contacts. To measure consumer awareness of safety information from the Web Site and the *Consumer Product Safety Review*, data bases continue to be maintained to measure success against each baseline.

REFERENCES

Web Site Address: www.cpsc.gov

Consumer Product Safety Review, Superintendent of Documents, Pittsburgh, PA 15250.

INDUSTRY SATISFACTION WITH CPSC SERVICES



STRATEGIC GOAL: By the year 2001, 80 percent of industry and other groups are satisfied with the timeliness and usefulness of the advice and guidance provided by CPSC staff on reporting obligations and requirements, the interpretation of product safety rules and regulations and the applicability of individual regulations.

THE PROGRAM

The Commission's Compliance program ensures that firms comply with the laws, regulations and standards that protect consumers from hazardous products. Firms must comply with CPSC's safety standards. Manufacturers, distributors and retailers must report to the Commission if they obtain information that reasonably supports a conclusion that one of their products: (1) fails to comply with a safety standard or banning rule issued under the Consumer Product Safety Act, (2) contains a defect that could create a substantial product hazard or (3) creates an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death. To help firms comply, Commission staff provide guidance regarding reporting requirements, the applicability of individual regulations, and acceptable corrective action plans, testing laboratories, insurance companies, attorneys and others. When a violation of a safety standard is found or if a defective product is identified, CPSC works cooperatively and quickly with industry to obtain correction of the violation or recall of the hazardous product.

REDUCING THE RISK

The level of satisfaction of industry with the Commission's services is important to the agency. If CPSC's guidance is useful and clear, firms will be more likely to produce safe products from the onset. In addition, effective guidance will enable firms to assess the need for correcting a product hazard more quickly, allowing hazardous products to be removed from the marketplace in a more timely way, as well as encouraging the manufacture of safer products in the future.

Recently, the Agency initiated two programs to assist industry in complying more quickly with CPSC's regulations: the "No Preliminary Determination (No PD)" and Small Business Ombudsman programs. With the "No PD" program, a firm that reports and corrects a problem quickly will not be subject to a preliminary determination that the product represents a substantial risk of injury. Advantages of this program to industry include reductions in paperwork, red tape, and potential legal expenses related to the recall of potentially defective products. The advantages

of this program to CPSC include removing hazardous products from consumers' hands more quickly. With the Ombudsman program, Commission staff help small business persons comply more easily with product safety guidelines and manufacture safer products. This program provides firms with a single point of contact that expedites a clearly understandable response from the CPSC technical staff. On the average, the Commission responds to about 90 calls per month since the program began in 1996.

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

CPSC has set a strategic goal to have an overall 80 percent of firms surveyed satisfied with the services they received from CPSC by the year 2001, both for products regulated by safety standards and those not subject to safety standards. Because there have been no formal evaluations of firms' satisfaction in the past (i.e., no baseline information), the goal was set based on a level of satisfaction acceptable to the Commission.

CPSC Services

- Guidance and Advice
 - Reporting requirements
 - Regulatory requirements
 - Interpretations
 - Applicability of individual regulations
 - Corrective action plans
 - Recall plans
 - Small Business Ombudsman
- Technical Review
- "No PD" program

STRATEGIES

To achieve high levels of satisfaction from firms reporting to CPSC, staff will maintain and adhere to a list of customer service standards for industry contacts. The standards aim to provide firms with:

- Courteous service by knowledgeable staff.
- Clear and informative guidance on reporting and regulatory requirements.
- Responses to written requests for interpretation within a fixed schedule of business days, depending on the level of complexity.
- Responses to "No PD" reports and other queries within a fixed schedule of business days, depending on the level of complexity.
- Responses to small businesses who make an inquiry through the Office of the Ombudsman within a fixed schedule of business days, depending on the level of complexity.

LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

CPSC will rely primarily on two basic types of long-term performance measures to assess the satisfaction of industry with CPSC's services and the adherence of CPSC to its customer service standards. Surveys of industry will provide an assessment of the percent of firms satisfied with CPSC services and in-house tracking systems will provide time-to-respond measures.

To measure industry satisfaction with CPSC services, surveys or telephone interviews will be conducted periodically of those firms who contacted CPSC during a specified time period. Customer service standards that require a judgment by each firm (e.g., "We will provide you with courteous service), will be assessed by direct questioning (e.g., "Were you treated courteously by CPSC staff?"). Customer service standards that are better measured by tracking systems (e.g., "We will respond to your request within 2 weeks") will have systems in place to determine if staff responded in the specified time period.

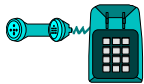
REFERENCES

Corrective Action Handbook: A Guide for Manufacturers, Importers, Distributors and Retailers on Reporting Under Section 15 of the Consumer Product Safety Act and Preparing for, Initiating and Implementing Product Safety Corrective Action Plans. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, October 1988.

Regulated Products Handbook: A Guide for Manufacturers, Importers, Distributors and Retailers on Procedures Relating to the Enforcement of Standards and Regulations Issued Under the Consumer Product Safety Act, the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, the Flammable Fabrics Act and Poison Prevention Packaging Act. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, February 1994.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH CPSC SERVICES

**CPSC's Toll-Free
Hotline Number:
1-800-638-CPSC**



STRATEGIC GOAL: Sustain the high level of consumer satisfaction with the Hotline and Clearinghouse and the states with CPSC's State Partnership Program at 90% or better through the year 2001.

THE PROGRAM

The Commission alerts the public to important safety information through the agency's Hotline, National Injury Information Clearinghouse and State Partners Program. The Hotline is a toll-free service that allows consumers to report product complaints or product-related injuries, learn about recalls and safety hazards, and obtain safety publications. The National Injury Information Clearinghouse provides data to the public in response to nearly six thousand requests each year. It also alerts manufacturers to potential hazards associated with their products by providing them with consumer complaints, reported incidents and accident investigations involving their products. The Commission's State Partners Program, using limited CPSC funds and CPSC-developed safety information, brings product safety services to consumers through cooperative programs with state and local governments. The program extends CPSC's reach throughout the Nation.

REDUCING THE RISK

The satisfaction of consumers and our State partners with CPSC services is important to the agency. If consumers are satisfied with safety information they receive through the Hotline and Clearinghouse, they will more likely request and use this information to protect themselves and their families. If our State partners are satisfied with CPSC's safety information and response to them, they are more likely to incorporate this safety information into their local ongoing programs, again protecting consumers from product-related injuries and deaths.

- **Hotline**
 - Report unsafe products
 - Report product-related injuries
 - Product recall information
 - Tips on buying safe products
 - Tips on using products safely
 - Safety publications

- **Clearinghouse**
 - Injury data
 - Death data
 - In-depth investigations
 - Fax-on-demand

- **State Partners**
 - Injury and death data
 - Product recall advice
 - Education materials
 - Training
 - Speakers
 - Exhibit materials

SETTING THE STRATEGIC GOAL

CPSC has set a strategic goal to sustain the high level of consumer satisfaction with the Hotline and Clearinghouse and the states with CPSC's State Partnership Program at 90% or better through the year 2001. A recent formal evaluation of these three services showed consumers and partners to be very satisfied with CPSC's services.

STRATEGIES

To sustain the high level of customer satisfaction with the Hotline, Clearinghouse and State Partners Program, staff will maintain and adhere to a list of customer service standards. Consumers or State partners will be able to:

- Speak to a knowledgeable and courteous staff person.
- Receive the most up-to-date safety information.
- Have a response to a request within a specified time, usually within one to five business days.
- Receive a return call or have request acknowledged in a specified time, usually within one to two business days.
- If needed, arrange to speak to a CPSC staff member in one of 19 languages.
- Have a consumer complaint recorded accurately and a copy mailed for verification within two business days.

LONG TERM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

CPSC will rely primarily on two basic types of long-term performance measures to assess the satisfaction of consumers and State partners with CPSC's services and the adherence of CPSC to its customer service standards. Surveys will provide the percent of consumers and State partners satisfied with CPSC services, and in-house tracking systems will provide time-to-respond measures. These surveys may be telephone interviews or mail questionnaires.

REFERENCES

Meeting Our Customer Service Standards. Washington, D.C.: Office of Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, September 1996.